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SUBJECT: Bogota Mini Dublin Group Meeting

1. (SBU) Summary: The Bogota Mini Dublin Group held a biannual meeting on May 11 to discuss the ten recommendations for Colombia agreed upon in November, 2003. This session acknowledged the USG's leadership in counter-narcotics cooperation with the GOC. Several examples of bilateral programs were reviewed by other group members, including a presentation of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) programs that highlighted several important points of divergence between that group's objectives and those of the USG. End summary.

2. (U) The Bogota Mini Dublin Group convened May 11 with the participation of Embassy's Political and Narcotics Affairs Sections, the UNODC, and representatives of the embassies of Spain (current Mini Dublin chair), UK, France, Italy, Germany, Japan, and Canada. On the agenda was discussion of the ten recommendations from the previous Central Dublin Group meeting at the end of 2003.

3. (SBU) The ten recommendations discussed were:

- to continue to maintain incentives for alternative products and market access through generalized trade preferences and similar systems;
- to encourage the GOC to continue voluntary crop eradication programs by increasing the presence of the state via social programs to facilitate development;
- to increase control of terrestrial and fluvial trafficking routes to neighboring countries, particularly towards the Venezuelan border;
- to increase passenger and baggage control in airports;
- to study the creation of an airport control system for cargo freight similar to the port security program already in place;
- to facilitate the development of monitored/controlled delivery and undercover agents;
- to increase coordination between the GOC interagency community involved in anti-narcotics programs;
- to increase the presence of GOC counter-narcotics attaches in drug consuming countries;
- to encourage Colombian cooperation with neighboring countries, especially Venezuela, Brazil, and Ecuador;
- to reduce demand and consumption in Colombia as well as the production and trafficking of illegal narcotics;

4. (SBU) Despite agreement on the importance of the above action recommendations, participating members had few contributions to offer in terms of practical programs either underway or planned. Discussion of ongoing programs and activities was led by Embassy officers.

5. (SBU) By way of underscoring policy disagreement with the USG's priorities, UNODC explained that it does not agree with the GOC (and the US Country Team) that manual, voluntary eradication should be a prerequisite to attaining alternative development assistance. The UNODC also explained its philosophy that alternative development, rather than law enforcement, should be the first response in many areas where illicit crops are grown.

6. (SBU) The UNODC also noted that it was actively inviting GOC agencies to participate in its Integrated System for the Monitoring of Illicit Crops (SIMCI), ostensibly to promote interagency input and analysis. However, GOC participation appears to be composed entirely of GOC entities that are outspoken opponents of aerial eradication (Ministry of Environment, National Parks, etc.). The influence of these groups may help explain SIMCI's insistence that illicit crop cultivation in national parks and indigenous reserves declined substantially in 2003, despite the absence of spraying, significant law enforcement dete